NEW BOOKS.

Mr. Hewlett's Latest Story.

The opening chapter describing the father and mother and five daughters of a respectable family in Mr. Maurice Hewlett's story of "Open Country" (Charles Scribner's Sons) is keen and amusing and altogether delightful. We must have a great liking for Vicky, or Victoria Percival, who at 22 made astonishing epigrams about her mother and about other people who invited strongly her ingenious comment, but of course it was Sanchia, the youngest daughter, the beauty of the family, who was 20 and very serious, who overwhelmed us.

In the second chapter we have a recurrence of Senhouse, the gentleman gypsy of one of the author's earlier stories. He made us a little doubtful because, it will be remembered, he knew all the poets, and had radical theories and lived an extravagantly simple life, notwithstanding that his father owned a coal mine. A reformer who wears sandals and prefers dry sand to soap, and quivers with appreciative despair when he recalls (as Senhouse frequently does) Shelley's phrase, put in the mouth of Panthea, "the space within my plumes," is qualified to excite our apprehensions.

But Senhouse here is blessed with very effective humor, and he shows us from the start that he can be immensely interesting. It is a little difficult to believe that Sanchia, who was London bred, could have been quite unconscious and innocent when she went wading in the lily pool. Still we feel it ungracious to doubt the strong intimations of the story. At 20 she was serious and sincere. She was also a reasonably completed and a beautiful fig[illegible]

The story describes frankly the scene at the lily pool. We read: "Preparations began. Senhouse rolled up his flannel trousers as high as they would go and pushed up the sleeves of his sweater. The young lady produced pins from somewhere about her person and holding them in her mouth proceeded to bind her raiment about her middle and to secure it there. Without a tremor or visible flicker of self-consciousness she revealed to this chance acquaintance as fine a pair of legs as anybody could have to show. Not Artemis, high girt for the chase, could have bared finer or dared more. The artist in our friend admired and the man was stirred. He dated his subjection from that moment."

The letters of Senhouse to Sanchia overflowed with his own lyrical, scholarly, reformatory and extremely interesting intelligence. He called her a reincarnation of Artemis the Chaste and Fair. He set her to inquiring as to the meaning of anarchy and the rights of property. Of course the subject of religion came to engage her eager mind. The story says: "A young Sanchia of 20 years, her hair newly put up and the seriousness upon her of the hush before sunrise—what was she to do, confronted by these questions? What could she do but inquire of her friend his view of God?" It is added that she did it with a very sober pen and with lips pale and compressed.

His answer is full of interest. He touched upon his own habit of pouring a moderate libation to Pan and the nymphs as often as he had beer. He said that he seldom went to church because he felt more aware of high God out of doors. The god for him was old Terminus, who insisted upon being worshipped in the open air, with the consequence that when they enclosed him in the temple of Capitoline Jove they had to leave a hole in the roof for his express benefit. Wasn't it Oliver Wendell Holmes who did not approve of growing oaks in flower pots? "Wise old man," commented Senhouse, making proverbs like Polonius." St. in a cathedral this vagabond managed to get a thrill. "Out of the gray stillness," he wrote to Sanchia, "a boy's young voice goes spearing and trembling up, and you forget all about the shock headed rogue in his tumbled surplice and believe for a few blessed moments that he is quiring with the young eyed cherubim."

He mentioned Antipater of Sidon in his letter, and we have no idea what Sanchia made of that. She had a clearer notion, doubtless, when he came to the matter of catching the English in moments when they were truly religious. "As for our blessed fellow countrymen," he wrote, "if you want to see them truly religious, and meaning it from the bottom of their hearts, go and see them at church on the veranda of a Swiss hotel—in their black coats and pressed trousers—all the women in gloves, and the curate, who was in knickerbockers on Saturday and will be in them on Monday, saying 'Dearly beloved brethren' in a throaty voice which, thank the Lord, he will lose all the rest of the week." It is all very sprightly, very exuberant, giving a sense of levitation, even of dizziness at times.

As for Sanchia, though her head was full of Senhouse, it was Nevile Ingram of Wanless Park, Felsboro', a much baser man than the vagabond lyrist, who touched her heart. We found Mr. William Chevenix's description of his friend Ingram very beautiful. Said this interesting gentleman to Mrs. Percival: "I don't say you'll like him and I don't say you won't. No Shakespeare and musical glasses about Nevile, you know. Rich chap, well bred and all that. Oh, they're good people, those Ingrams, you know. No connection with that lot in Duchess's Gate, mind you. Soap boilers they were. I happen to know. The Wanless party's a different set altogether. And a lively customer at a dance! He can shake a leg, as they say. Ah, and you ought to see him on a horse, Mrs. Percival. That's where Nevile's at home. He's got a seat. Plays for the Go-Betweens at Hurlingham. He's at it to-day, I believe; he's mostly at it. Oh, he's not under a bushel, you know, old Nevile. No, no. He's well alight. What is it? Burning upwards to his point of bliss, eh? I forget these things so. But there he is, don't you know." He had a wife in Sicily, a bad lot, who had abandoned him some years before. This was awkward when Sanchia fell in love with him. But Sanchia was single minded and determined. The trouble came of that.

We found the story exceedingly interesting. It is beautifully and brilliantly told.

A Strong and Suspected Tale.

A particularly interesting part of Retsel Terreve's story of "A Man Without Principle?" (the Hocking Publishing Company, Norfolk, Va.) is where the giant High Church minister asks Marie to marry him. The minister says: "See, dear heart! The eventide draws near, and soon men's passions, sorrows, struggles will vanish in forgetfulness. Look, Marie! Look, my princess! The setting sun is waiting, tarrying for the joyous message from your lips, for the signal of triumphant love."

But Marie felt herself unable to make the message joyous. So far from making it that she said: "Perhaps the setting sun does sometimes bring quietude, but darkness follows too and brings its many horrors to uneasy, hopeless minds. The sun you speak of grins sardonically at what it leaves behind instead of acting as a scavenger for you or I or those who dread the night. I do suffer. Why should I deny it? But my relief, dear Melville, is not to come through you nor yet through yon low, descending orb."

Marie suffered from having had a "past." In the eleventh chapter of the third part of the story it may be read how punishment was visited upon the man responsible for her sorrow. In a church at midnight we find him manacled and tossing uncomfortably upon a narrow bench. The darkness was slightly relieved by rays of pale moonlight. His shattered nerves and parched throat craved brandy and soda. The organ began to play. This was too much. With a curse he lifted the heavy iron ball attached to his fetters and staggered toward the sound. "Bang! Crash!" This was the iron ball falling from his nerveless hands. Marie turned from the organ and addressed him in a passionless voice. "Your wife, Lawrence, they say is dead. You will keep your promise now and marry me, won't you?" He refused. Perceiving that she was not a ghost he reviled her. Her quiet mood changed to one of consuming rage. She told him to pray, and added: "Here now, by heaven, dog, you die!"

She was as good as her word. Here is the strong description of the villain's end: "No tigress pouncing on her unsuspecting prey, no thunderbolt descending from a cloudless sky, ever crushed its victim under impact more terrific than is this. Quick as the lightning's flash a blade of cruel, remorseless metal glitters in the moonlight—shoots downward, forward, penetrating to the seat of life. A thud, a moan, a twitching movement of the body unobservable in the dark." A reflection of interest and eloquence is added. "Thus," says the author, "does the blood of generations past, of an ancestry indigenous to southern climes, of a chivalry where death alone was held the price of woman's wrongs reassert and prove itself."

After killing the perfidious Lawrence Marie made an end of herself. She plunged the remorseless metal into her own bosom. But she did not yield to death immediately. She remembered that she had a message to leave. The author does not spare us at this point. "Notice," he says, "with what effort, with what incredible torture she manages to raise herself, her marble countenance facing the spot covered by the moonbeam. Her left hand supports her. Her right—watch it. It withdraws the knife. Now her finger is rubbed here and there upon her breast. Now she raises it—see! it is dripping with her blood. She begins to write in crimson letters on the wall."

We may be thankful that these distressing scenes are offset by a humor that is as remarkable as they are. The three chief characters, the reclaimed convict, the giant minister and the benevolent gambler, are all witty. Seldom in the dialogue of a tale do we find such a quantity and such a quality of repartee. From a publisher's notice we learn that a number of people to whom the book has been sent have been profoundly impressed by it and have even suspected that it is "the" American novel.

Very Good Indeed.

Alice Duer Miller's story of "Less Than Kin" (Henry Holt and Company) is admirably written and full of interest. It tells how young Vickers, who was off in a South American country because the United States did not seem a safe place for him, assumed the personality of another exile named Lee, who had died of drink; how he came to New York and established himself in the exclusive Lee family; how he lived down an evil reputation that the dead Lee had left behind him, and how a girl who thought that she had reason to hate him at first came to love him at last, notwithstanding that she was engaged to another man.

The story is ingenious. It has quick turns and surprises. It is very well done.

Raffles Again.

Not only is Mr. E. W. Hornung's "Mr. Justice Raffles" (Charles Scribner's Sons) a rattling good story, it is a good long story in which the incidents are woven together with art; the best work, we should say, that the author has turned out yet. The reader will find it difficult to lay the book down after taking it up. Raffles of course is the same, though Mr. Hornung seems inclined to inject some tinge of regret, if not of remorse, into his makeup. All cavil at resuscitation is stopped by making this tale an episode in Raffles's past. The author may feel flattered at the testimony the police records give to the influence his books have had on the rising generation. The adventurous part of the burglar's profession in times of peace seems attractive to youth as devoid of moral sense as his hero. Most readers, however, will disregard the lack of morality in a very exciting story; perhaps they will agree with Mr. Hornung's estimate of the comparative iniquity of the gentleman burglar and the usurious money lender.

A Connecticut Country.

An interesting addition to local history is made by Mr. Dwight C. Kilbourn's compilation "The Bench and Bar of Litchfield County, Connecticut, 1709-1909" (the author, Litchfield, Conn.). This includes Chief Justice Church's address at the centennial of the county, the reminiscences of three distinguished lawyers, historical notes and accounts of noted trials, articles on county officials, on early law reports, on the county jail and on various legal anecdotes and jests and a catalogue of the students in the famous Litchfield law school, the first law school in the country. A large part of the volume is taken up with brief biographies of lawyers who have practised at the Litchfield county bar.

In these articles there is a mass of antiquarian information that is of interest to others than Litchfield lawyers. The bar included many men of national importance, from signers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution like Roger Sherman and Oliver Wolcott to United States Senators like Orville H. Platt.

Ticknor's Life and Letters.

In the introduction to the new edition, the fourteenth, of "The Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor" (Houghton Mifflin Company) we are told of Ticknor's great merits; for instance, that he was really the founder of the Boston Public Library, the model for such libraries throughout the country; that he introduced the elective system at Harvard College, a service for which President Eliot has often given him credit, and that he was the author of a history of Spanish literature that broke open new ground and has never been superseded.

From the point of view of the reader of his letters and journals, however, it is of more importance that he was the first American who studied in Germany, that his social standing enabled him to meet people of distinction in Europe and the United States and that he kept a record of what he saw and did from 1814 nearly to the time of his death in 1871. His papers were edited admirably by his

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